

## Mark your calendars now!

### Candidates Forum

Thursday, Oct. 9

7-9:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, 1500 Warburton

Co-sponsored by the Santa Clara Citizens

Advisory Committee, the Santa Clara Chamber

of Commerce and Convention-Visitors Bureau,

and the Santa Clara Weekly.

Broadcast live on Cable Channel 15.

Videotapes available for checkout in the library.

### Monday, Oct. 20

Last day to register to vote in the Nov. 4

election. Voter registration cards are available

in the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, the library,

and all City fire stations as well as the Registrar

of Voters office, 1555 Berger Dr., San Jose.

### Tuesday, Oct. 28

Last day to request a Vote by Mail ballot

from the Registrar of Voters, [www.sccvote.org](http://www.sccvote.org).



### The Final Word Candidates Forum

Monday, Nov. 3

7-9:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, 1500 Warburton Ave.

Broadcast live on Cable Channel 15.

### Tuesday, Nov. 4

Election Day!

## Campaign expenses ... where does the \$\$\$ go?

Some candidates for City Council in Santa Clara spend more than \$20,000 for their campaign. [See related article about voluntary expenditure limits on page 3.] None of this is public tax money and it is all either given by donors or contributed by the candidate.

In 2006, the successful candidates for City Council spent more than 78% of their campaign fund on direct voter contact such as mailings, brochures, advertisements and websites. The remaining 22% was spent primarily on consulting services, fundraising, office needs and other support costs.

Any surplus money in the campaign account must be spent on a single post-election event or distributed to bona fide tax-exempt charitable, educational, civic or religious non-profit organizations.

For more information about campaign accounts and how campaign funds are spent, visit the City Clerk's Office in City Hall or the website [www.SantaClaraCampaignDollars.org](http://www.SantaClaraCampaignDollars.org).

## The challenge of campaigning

Only a few individuals in any community are willing to commit to public service as an elected official. Serving as a member of the Santa Clara City Council is not a full time job, even though it requires many hours of work each week. Every city relies on elected officials for the democratic process to work, and the residents who step up to shoulder this responsibility should be commended, whether you agree with their viewpoints or not.

Campaigning for elected office is difficult.

In a short period of time, with limited funds, each candidate wants to reach every potential voter with persuasive information that results in votes at the ballot box. There are limited ways for candidates to "get the word out."

- Door-to-door – Candidates and their supporters try very hard to make one-on-one contact with as many voters as possible, a difficult task when there are 45,000 households. They can spend hundreds of hours and walk many miles to knock on doors and talk directly to voters.

**Welcome candidates when they come calling – it's your chance to talk one-on-one about issues important to you.**

- Candidate forums – The opportunity to hear several candidates at one time is not only convenient for voters, it's one of the best ways to see how candidates are different from one another.

**Attend candidate forums, and listen to what candidates have to say.**

- Candidate meet-and-greet events – Campaign supporters will frequently host small gatherings so that family, friends and neighbors can meet the candidate of their choice and become more informed about their qualifications and views on important issues.

**Take advantage of invitations to meet-and-greet events to become better acquainted with candidates.**

- Robo-calls – Automated telephone calls with a pre-recorded message from the candidate or a supporter are only legal in California if a live voice is used initially to begin the conversation.

**Listen or not, and understand why candidates might choose to use this method to communicate with thousands of voters.**

- Paid advertising – Ads in newspapers, radio and TV commercials, billboards and other promotions are expensive and provide very little time and space to provide substantive information.

**Let advertising call your attention to a candidate or issue, but do your homework before making your final decisions.**

- Candidate websites – These can provide a little information, or a lot, depending on the candidate. They are inexpensive to maintain and can be changed quickly to focus on new issues as they emerge. The League of Women Voters website [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) provides profiles of candidates and can link you to individual candidate websites.

**Read websites as you would any paid advertising, remembering the content is from the candidate and it is up to voters to verify the accuracy of the content.**

- Online blogs – Blogs can be originated by anyone and say anything. The content is the opinion of the author or authors, and some may be written in an inflammatory way to grab attention.

**If you read blogs, you will need to decide if the content is biased or has merit.**

It is easy to criticize the campaign tactics of candidates – and many times those criticisms are justified. But voters should also understand how difficult, and how important, it is for candidates to communicate with voters with the limited means available.



- Ballot statements – Every voter receives a sample ballot with statements written by each candidate. They are informative, but with a 200-word limit do not go into depth.

**Read ballot statements carefully, but remember they provide limited information.**

- Direct mail – Rising postage costs and a flood of mailers during campaign season can make it difficult for candidates to use letters, brochures and postcards to communicate effectively with voters.

**Pay special attention to local campaign mailers, and be sure to note who sponsored them.**

- Yard signs – Signs can build name recognition, but they are not helpful to voters in learning about the platforms and values of candidates.

**Notice candidate names, but make the effort to learn more about what they stand for.**



Public education from the City of Santa Clara supporting the  
City Code of Ethics & Values • [www.VoteEthics.org](http://www.VoteEthics.org)

